

# Instructional Material Critique & Redesign with Infographic

Gianna Luna

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Dr. J. Cowin

## Intro

The selection and implementation of instructional materials play a critical role in supporting multilingual learners in both language development and academic learning. For multilingual learners, access to grade-level content depends not only on the material itself, but on how it is presented and supported instructionally. As a future TESOL educator, it is important to select materials that are culturally responsive and accessible for students with diverse language backgrounds and experiences, not just academically appropriate texts. For this assignment, I will be analyzing two texts, *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, to evaluate how well they support MLs in developing both language and content knowledge. Through this analysis, I will examine the strengths and limitations of each text, connect them to TESOL theory and New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, and propose instructional redesigns that better support language development and student engagement.

### Step 1: Standards Alignment & Initial Analysis

*The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi is an elementary-level picture book that tells the story of a young girl named Unhei who moves to the United States from Korea and struggles with whether to keep her name or choose a new one to fit in with her American classmates. This text is effective for multilingual learners because it centers around themes of identity, culture, and belonging. These themes are relevant for students who are navigating multiple languages and cultural experiences. Students at different language levels can follow the storyline with structured support, even if they are still learning English, because of the book's powerful visual help for comprehension. Additionally, because students can relate the work to their own names, cultures, and experiences, they can form meaningful connections to the story's message. This creates opportunities for oracy development through various forms of collaboration work, such as partner discussions, turn-and-talks, and whole group sharing.

Another strength of *The Name Jar* is its cultural relevance and representation. The story validates the experiences of multilingual learners by showing the challenges of adapting to a new language and culture while maintaining one's identity. This aligns with culturally responsive teaching practices, which emphasize the importance of students seeing themselves reflected in the curriculum. The language in the text is also relatively accessible for elementary students, especially when supported with visuals and teacher scaffolding. Teachers can easily build vocabulary instruction around key terms in the story and use strategies such as sentence frames and modeling to support comprehension.

Although *The Name Jar* is a strong and engaging text for multilingual learners, the delivery of the instruction by the educator is what measures the text's effectiveness. Based on my teaching philosophy, I believe that texts should be intentionally selected to both engage students and meet them at their instructional level, while also creating a safe and inclusive learning

environment where students feel valued and supported. As discussed in *Matching Books and Readers* by Nancy L. Hadaway and Terrell A. Young, it is important to consider factors such as comprehension, vocabulary, and students' ability to make meaning from a text when selecting materials. This directly connects to *The Name Jar* because the text is accessible in terms of storyline and visuals, but still requires support for multilingual learners to fully engage with the deeper themes of identity and belonging. With strategies such as scaffolding, students who require support with texts being broken down and explaining their ideas will be able to make meaning of the text in depth. This reinforces my belief that students need both meaningful content and appropriate support to successfully engage with language and learning.

Despite its strengths, *The Name Jar* also has limitations when used as an instructional material for multilingual learners. Although the story itself is engaging and culturally relevant, it does not independently provide the language support that multilingual learners need to fully participate in academic discussions. For example, students may need teacher-provided scaffolds such as vocabulary review, sentence frames, and guided discussion prompts in order to express their ideas about the text. In my teaching philosophy, I emphasize the importance of providing support such as visuals, structured discussions, and modeling to ensure that all students can access grade-level content. The visuals in the book may support basic comprehension; however, they are not enough on their own to help students develop academic language.

The importance of language and cultural competency in assisting multilingual learners is another crucial factor to take into account while analyzing *The Name Jar*. As Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow explain, language learning involves more than just understanding vocabulary and grammar; students must also understand the sociocultural norms that influence communication (2013, p. 396). This correlates to the themes seen in *The Name Jar*, as the story centers around cultural identity, belonging, and navigating a new social environment. Multilingual learners may not fully grasp the deeper cultural meanings without explicit instruction and discussion. For example, understanding why Unhei feels pressure to change her name requires not only language comprehension but also an understanding of social expectations of moving to a different country with a variety of identities.

Additionally, *The Name Jar* is a story that allows students to engage in discussion and make personal connections, which are essential for language development. Research emphasizes that language learning is strengthened through social interaction and meaningful communication. For example, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow describe how social strategies involve interacting with others to clarify meaning and practice communication, which supports learners in developing confidence and communicative competence (2014, p. 537). This connects directly to how *The Name Jar* can be used instructionally because students benefit from opportunities such as partner discussions, role-play, and sharing personal experiences related to the text. However, without structured opportunities for interaction, multilingual learners may not fully participate in these discussions. This reinforces the idea that while the text itself is meaningful and engaging, its effectiveness for MLs depends on how it is supported through intentional instructional practices. This also connects to my approach as a TESOL educator that language develops best

through meaningful interaction, where students are given opportunities to collaborate and take risks in a supportive environment.

*The Name Jar* also aligns with several New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards. This book demonstrates strong skill areas in reading comprehension, speaking, and listening. The text supports 1R2, as students can identify the central idea of the story and retell key details about Unhei's experience adjusting to a new school. It also aligns with 1R3, as students describe the main character, setting, and major events throughout the story. Additionally, the book strongly supports 1R9, as students are encouraged to make connections between the text and their own experiences, particularly in relation to identity, culture, and belonging. This is especially meaningful for multilingual learners, who may see their own experiences reflected in the story. In terms of speaking and listening, the text aligns with 1SL1, as it promotes collaborative conversations through partner discussions and shared responses. However, in order for multilingual learners to fully meet these standards, they may require additional support such as sentence frames, modeling, and structured opportunities to participate in discussions.

*Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan is a novel that is better suited for upper elementary or middle school students because it explores more complex themes such as immigration, resilience, and social class. This text is highly relevant for multilingual learners because these themes reflect the lived experiences of many multilingual students, making the text both meaningful and engaging. Unlike simpler texts, *Esperanza Rising* challenges students to think more deeply about character development and changes over time. The story follows Esperanza as she is forced to leave her privileged life in Mexico and adjust to a completely new reality as a migrant worker in the United States. Throughout the book, Esperanza experiences a major transformation, growing from a child who is used to comfort and privilege into a more mature and hardworking young girl. This coming-of-age journey highlights important themes that are meaningful for many students, especially multilingual learners, and can connect to. All students can connect to this book, whether through their own experiences or through learning about the experiences of others. For multilingual learners, this type of engagement supports both language development and critical thinking skills.

*Esperanza Rising* is a popular favorite book for many students. It has assets of great cultural relevance and representation. Students can learn about other viewpoints and see pieces of their own identities reflected in the novel, which offers insight into Mexican culture and the lives of migrant workers. Since students are more engaged when they can relate to the content, this is consistent with culturally responsive teaching methods. As students come across new academic and subject-specific language throughout the book, the text also offers chances for vocabulary growth and comprehension techniques. Students can participate in discussions, make predictions, and examine significant events in the story with the help of their teachers. This book encourages students to think critically and draw significant connections, benefiting both language development and material acquisition.

Although *Esperanza Rising* is a meaningful and engaging text for students, similarly to *The Name Jar*, its effectiveness for multilingual learners relies on how it is delivered to students. My teaching philosophy is deeply rooted in creating a classroom environment where all students feel supported and are given access to grade-level content, regardless of their language level. When reading a book such as *Esperanza Rising*, these relevant themes must be taught in a way that is comprehensible for all students. Students may not automatically understand the deeper meaning of the text without support with the language and structure of the book. This reinforces the principle that it is not enough to solely choose a strong text; educators must also provide scaffolds that are intentional and help students engage with both the content and the language.

One of the main challenges of using *Esperanza Rising* with multilingual learners is the complexity of the language used throughout the book. The book includes more advanced vocabulary, longer sentence structures, and examples of figurative language that may be challenging for students who are still developing English proficiency. Furthermore, the story includes historical and cultural references that students may not be familiar with. Therefore, comprehension of what the meaning of the plot of the story may be challenging for some students. This alludes to the severity of scaffolding strategies such as gaining background knowledge, pre-teaching vocabulary, chunking the text into smaller sections, etc. By implementing supports such as these, students will be able to gain access to the same content while also continuing to build their language skills.

A key strength of *Esperanza Rising* is its ability to make connections with students' identities and lived experiences. I conclude that students' backgrounds and cultures should be viewed as assets in the classroom. This book provides an opportunity for students to see aspects of their own experiences reflected in the story. The key themes related to immigration hardships and experiences, the power of family, and adapting to change are all themes that students can relate to. When students feel that their experiences are valued, they are more likely to engage and participate in learning. This also creates opportunities for students to learn about perspectives that may be different from their own. Facilitating group discussions and aiding in community building and empathy for each other's backgrounds and cultures. This connects to the idea that language learning is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding cultural perspectives and social contexts, which play an important role in communication (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014).

Another key strength of this novel is its variety of opportunities for discussion and collaboration. My philosophy on language development places emphasis on the notion that students learn best when they are given opportunities to use language in meaningful ways and in low-impact environments through discussion and interaction. *Esperanza Rising* offers many topics of conversation for students to practice speaking and listening skills, such as discussions on the topics of character development, resilience, and real-life experiences of immigration.

*Esperanza Rising* aligns with several New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards at the Grade 5 level. The text strongly supports standard 5R2, as students identify themes such as resilience, family, and perseverance, and explain how these

ideas develop throughout the novel. It also aligns with 5R3, because students analyze how Esperanza changes over time and compare her life before and after her experiences as a migrant worker. In addition, the text connects to 5R4 because students must determine the meanings of complex vocabulary and figurative language to fully understand the story. Finally, the book supports 5SL1, because this book offers many opportunities for students to engage in collaborative discussions, share their interpretations, and respond to the ideas of others. However, for multilingual learners to fully meet these standards, they may require scaffolds to access the text and express their understanding.

## **Step 2: Non-Negotiable ELL Criteria Assessment**

This evaluation uses both the Non-Negotiable ELL Criteria and Miekley's ESL Textbook Evaluation Checklist to analyze how well *The Name Jar* and *Esperanza Rising* support multilingual learners (Miekley, 2005). The checklist looks at areas such as content, vocabulary, grammar, activities, and overall appropriateness for students. Using this framework helps break down each text in a more structured way and makes it easier to see both strengths and areas of needed support (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014).

When looking at *The Name Jar*, the text shows strong performance in Section A: Content. This is due to the structure of the story and its correlation to meaningful themes like identity, belonging, and adjusting to a new culture. It also scores highly in Section D: Attractiveness/Layout, since the visuals and illustrations play a major role in helping students understand key concepts of the story. It allows readers to observe emotions and attributes of the characters. However, in Section B: Vocabulary and Grammar, the text is more limited. While the vocabulary is appropriate and manageable, built-in repetition or explicit support for learning new words is less common. In Section C: Exercises and Activities, the book does not provide structured tasks or opportunities for students to practice language on their own. As a result, this implies that interaction and discussion have to be created by the teacher. Even with these limitations, Section III: Context shows that the text is highly appropriate for students and aligns well with classroom goals, especially when students are provided with appropriate scaffolds (Miekley, 2005).

*Esperanza Rising* shows a different pattern when evaluated using the checklist. Similar to *The Name Jar*, it scores very high in Section A: Content because it includes more complex and substantial themes such as immigration, resilience, and social class. When navigating these themes, it pushes students to apply deeper-level thinking skills about the "whys and the hows" throughout the book. However, in Section B: Vocabulary and Grammar, the text is more challenging. It includes more advanced vocabulary and figurative language, with less repetition, which can make it harder for multilingual learners to fully understand without support. In Section C: Exercises and Activities, the novel also lacks built-in supports such as guided questions or structured interaction, meaning that teachers need to design these opportunities themselves. In terms of Section D: Attractiveness/Layout, the text is engaging, but it does not include the same level of visual support as a picture book. Therefore, guided discussion and

activation of prior knowledge before reading a book such as this one is essential for comprehensible input. Despite this, Section III: Context shows that the text is still appropriate for students and valuable for instruction, as long as it is supported with scaffolding strategies like vocabulary instruction, chunking, and guided discussion (Miekley, 2005).

Both texts obtain strong characteristics in terms of content and cultural relevance, but they differ in how accessible they are for multilingual learners. *The Name Jar* is more immediately accessible because of its visuals and simpler language, while *Esperanza Rising* is more complex and requires greater support. Across both texts, the checklist highlights that there are fewer built-in supports for vocabulary development and structured language practice. This reinforces the idea that strong instructional materials still require intentional scaffolding to support multilingual learners. As emphasized in TESOL research, students benefit from opportunities to interact, receive support, and build language alongside content, rather than being expected to access complex texts independently (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014).

Textbook Evaluation Checklist		Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Totally Lacking	Mandatory	Optional	Not-Applicable
<b>The Name Jar</b>									
<b>I. Textbook</b>									
<b>A. Content</b>									
i. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner? (1,2,3) <sup>ii</sup>		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, ect.)? (2,18)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language? (5,10)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview? (1,2,3,7,21)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures? (1,13)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
<b>B. Vocabulary and Grammar</b>									
i. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty? (1,2,3)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)? (2,3,12)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are the new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so that the text is understandable and so that students are able to retain new vocabulary? (1,2,3,5)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use? (1,2,3,)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words? (7,8,9,11)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
<b>C. Exercises and Activities</b>									
i. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate? (1,2,3,5)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Do instructions in the textbook tell students to read for comprehension? (6)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used? (17)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension? (7,8,9,10)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Do the activities facilitate students' use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed? (1,2,3)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
vi. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts? (2,3)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
vii. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text? (2)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
<b>D. Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up</b>									
i. Is the cover of the book appealing? (1,2,3)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality? (1,2,3,14)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it? (1)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it? (15)		4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N

II Teacher's Manual									
A. General Features									
i. Does the manual help teachers understand the objectives and methodology of the text? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Are correct or suggested answers given for the exercises in the textbook? (1,2,3,4)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
B. Background Information									
i. Are teachers shown how to teach students to use cues from morphology, cognates, rhetorical relationships, and context to assist them in lexical inferencing? (7)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Is there a list of true and false cognates for vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
C. Methodological Guidance									
i. Are teachers given techniques for activating students' background knowledge before reading the text? (8,9,22)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Are teachers given adequate examples for teaching students to preview, skim, scan, summarize, and to find the main idea? (8,11,6)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Does the manual suggest a clear, concise method for teaching each lesson? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
D. Supplementary Exercises and Materials									
i. Does the manual give instructions on how to incorporate audio-visual material produced for the textbook? (2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Does the manual provide teachers with exercises to practice, test, and review vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Does the manual provide additional exercises for reinforcing grammar points in the text? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
III. Context									
A. Is the textbook appropriate for the curriculum? (1,2,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
i. Does the text coincide with the course goals? (1,2,3,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
B. Is the textbook appropriate for the students who will be using it? (1,2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
i. Is the text free of material that might be offensive? (1,6,16)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Are the examples and explanations understandable? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Will students enjoy reading the text selections? (1,2,3,15)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iv. Will the content meet students' felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose? (2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
C. Are the textbook and teacher's manual appropriate for the teacher who will be teaching from them? (1,2,4)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
i. Is the teacher proficient enough in English to use the teacher's manual? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	

Textbook Evaluation Checklist		Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Totally Lacking	Mandatory	Optional	Not Applicable
<h2>Esperanza Rising</h2>									
I. Textbook									
A. Content									
i. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, ect)? (2,16)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language? (5,10)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iv. Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview? (1,2,3,7,21)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
v. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures? (1,13)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
B. Vocabulary and Grammar									
i. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)? (2,3,12)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Are the new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so that the text is understandable and so that students are able to retain new vocabulary? (1,2,3,5)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iv. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
v. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words? (7,8,9,11)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
C. Exercises and Activities									
i. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate? (1,2,3,5)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Do instructions in the textbook tell students to read for comprehension? (6)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used? (17)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iv. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension? (7,8,9,10)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
v. Do the activities facilitate students' use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
vi. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts? (2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
vii. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text? (2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
D. Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up									
i. Is the cover of the book appealing? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
ii. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality? (1,2,3,14)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iii. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	
iv. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it? (15)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N	

II. Teacher's Manual							
A. General Features							
i. Does the manual help teachers understand the objectives and methodology of the text? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
ii. Are correct or suggested answers given for the exercises in the textbook? (1,2,3,4)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
B. Background Information							
i. Are teachers shown how to teach students to use cues from morphology, cognates, rhetorical relationships, and context to assist them in lexical inferring? (7)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
ii. Is there a list of true and false cognates for vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
C. Methodological Guidance							
i. Are teachers given techniques for activating students' background knowledge before reading the text? (8,9,22)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
ii. Are teachers given adequate examples for teaching students to preview, skim, scan, summarize, and to find the main idea? (8,11,6)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
iii. Does the manual suggest a clear, concise method for teaching each lesson? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
D. Supplementary Exercises and Materials							
i. Does the manual give instructions on how to incorporate audio-visual material produced for the textbook? (2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
ii. Does the manual provide teachers with exercises to practice, test, and review vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
iii. Does the manual provide additional exercises for reinforcing grammar points in the text? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
III. Context							
A. Is the textbook appropriate for the curriculum? (1,2,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
i. Does the text coincide with the course goals? (1,2,3,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
B. Is the textbook appropriate for the students who will be using it? (1,2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
i. Is the text free of material that might be offensive? (1,6,16)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
ii. Are the examples and explanations understandable? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
iii. Will students enjoy reading the text selections? (1,2,3,15)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
iv. Will the content meet students' felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose? (2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
C. Are the textbook and teacher's manual appropriate for the teacher who will be teaching from them? (1,2,4)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N
i. Is the teacher proficient enough in English to use the teacher's manual? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O N

### Step 3: Selection Rationale

The selection of *The Name Jar* and *Esperanza Rising* was intentional in order to include texts that support multilingual learners across different grade levels, while simultaneously addressing both academic and social-emotional development. These books were chosen because they are meaningful, culturally relevant, and provide opportunities for students to make connections to both themselves and the world around them. By implementing instruction in the classroom that enables students to make connections to themselves and the world around them, educators create lifelong learners. This directly reflects my teaching philosophy because it emphasizes creating a safe and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and are able to engage meaningfully in instruction. This approach is also supported by the *NYSED Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success*, which highlights the importance of “providing a safe and inclusive learning environment that recognizes and respects the languages and cultures of all students”. In addition, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow highlight the importance of relevance in instruction, explaining that the more that lessons focus on things with real-life relevance, the more they appeal to students (2013). This idea strongly guided my decision to choose both of these texts.

*The Name Jar* was selected because it is a powerful, accessible text that allows all students to make meaningful connections, regardless of their cultural background. In the first-grade classroom where I currently work, students come from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This makes it important to choose texts that are inclusive and relatable for all students, not just some. This aligns with the *NYSED Blueprint's* expectation of “designing and delivering instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for all diverse learners”.

In addition, it connects directly to my belief that students' cultural backgrounds and identities should be viewed as assets, and that when students feel respected and valued, they are more likely to engage in learning. The themes seen in this book, such as identity, belonging, and confidence, make this text universally relatable, even for students who may not connect specifically to the conflict that the main character experiences, of trying to fit in versus having a "different" name. One objective that aligns with this text is for students to recognize the importance of their own cultural identity while also valuing the diverse backgrounds of others, which supports both social-emotional growth and classroom community building.

In addition, I chose *The Name Jar* because of the variety of student-centered activities it allows for. Students can create their own "name jar" by sharing the meaning of their names and engaging in discussions about identity, practicing kindness, and inclusivity. These types of activities reflect my philosophy that language is best learned through meaningful interaction and real-world use. This is also supported by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, who explain that task-oriented instruction gives students opportunities to use language in meaningful ways, where "success is judged in terms of whether the tasks are performed" (2013). These activities not only support comprehension but also provide opportunities for students to practice speaking and listening skills. As stated in *the NYSED Blueprints*, it is crucial to place emphasis on "providing integrated language and content instruction to support language development through language-focused scaffolds".

*Esperanza Rising* was selected as a more complex, upper-elementary text that supports deeper thinking and more advanced literacy skills. I chose this book it is a common text, as it is recognized as an important and meaningful text, and in my school, it is even displayed as part of a "book hall of fame" due to its impact and relevance. The novel explores important themes such as immigration, resilience, social class, and personal growth, all of which are highly relevant for students. This aligns with the *NYSED Blueprint's* emphasis on "providing a clear vision for student success that includes high expectations for ELL/MLL student achievement and socio-emotional development". It tells the story of Esperanza, a young girl who is forced to leave her privileged life in Mexico and adapt to a new life in the United States during the Great Depression. Through this experience, she learns to overcome challenges such as poverty and loss, ultimately developing resilience and a deeper understanding of the importance of family and community. This reflects my belief that learning should be meaningful and connected to students' lives, as students are more engaged when they can see themselves in what they are learning. The story also introduces important historical context, allowing students to connect the past to present-day issues and supporting both content knowledge and critical thinking.

Additionally, this text aligns with my teaching philosophy of maintaining high expectations while providing the support students need to succeed. Although *Esperanza Rising* is more complex and linguistically demanding, it creates opportunities for students to engage in higher-level thinking, such as analyzing character development and discussing themes. In the book *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, it emphasizes that learning should also be transferable, meaning students should be able to apply what they learn to real-world

situations (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2013). This text supports that idea by encouraging students to reflect on perseverance, identity, and the importance of family and community, which are lessons that extend beyond the classroom.

The reason for choosing these two texts is that they reflect my overall approach to teaching, and that is honoring my students' identities. *The Name Jar* serves as a powerful source to support students as young learners in building confidence, developing a sense of identity, and feeling a sense of belonging in the classroom. *Esperanza Rising* builds on this by introducing more complex language and themes, while still allowing students to engage in meaningful discussion and critical thinking. Both texts support the idea that students' home languages and backgrounds should be valued, which aligns with the *NYSED Blueprint's* belief in "regarding home languages as instructional assets and using them in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge". This reinforces my goal of creating a classroom where students are supported but yet challenged, and can fulfill the expectation of developing life-long learners.

#### **STEP 4: WIDA Prime Analysis**

The WIDA Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials for ELLs (PRIME) gives a structured way to check how well teaching materials help multilingual students by building their language skills, making grade-level curriculum accessible for all learners, and preventing them from falling behind. The foundation of this framework is the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). This approach was used to examine *The Name Jar* and *Esperanza Rising* in terms of important elements such as academic language development, meeting objectives, asset-based philosophy, and access to challenging, grade-level content.

After analyzing the WIDA PRIME framework to reflect my selections, it is evident that *The Name Jar* strongly aligns with an asset-based philosophy that values students' identities and lived experiences. The WIDA framework emphasizes that instruction should create opportunities where "multicultural books allow students to practice academic concepts in ways that reflect the experiences of multilingual learners and their families" (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). This book possesses many strengths in this area because it offers a variety of ways that students can make meaningful connections between text and self, while also learning about the cultural backgrounds and showing appreciation for others.

In terms of academic language, *The Name Jar* supports early language development through discussion, storytelling, and personal connections. WIDA explains that first-grade students "tend to ask and answer questions about the world, themselves, and texts in multimodal ways" (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). *The Name Jar* supports this because students can engage in conversations about topics related to the story such as identity and belonging, while also using visuals and oral language to express their ideas. The structure of the text also supports key language uses such as narrating and informing, as students retell events and describe character conflicts.

Additionally, the text aligns with WIDA’s performance expectations for young learners by supporting both interpretive and expressive language. Students are able to listen to the story, interpret its meaning, and then respond through multiple means of expression. This connects to WIDA’s emphasis that language development occurs through “meaningful engagement in activities,” where students actively use language to communicate their ideas (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). While the book itself does not include explicit scaffolds, it provides a strong foundation for teachers to build in these supports to deliver appropriate instruction for equitable access for all students.

When analyzed through the WIDA PRIME framework, *Esperanza Rising* demonstrates strong alignment with grade-level rigor and academic language development for upper elementary multilingual learners. WIDA describes students in grades 4–5 as learners who are “beginning to think about more abstract ideas” and are developing the ability to “distinguish opinions from claims, and formulate claims substantiated with evidence” (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). This directly connects to *Esperanza Rising* because the text requires students to analyze complex themes such as immigration and social class struggles, while also supporting their ideas with evidence from the story.

The book also strongly supports the development of academic language across multiple domains. According to WIDA, upper elementary students engage in key language uses such as narrating, informing, explaining, and arguing, including the ability to “interpret and construct narratives in a variety of contexts” and “use evidence from texts or data to support claims” (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition). *Esperanza Rising* provides strong opportunities for this because students are given opportunities to analyze the character development of Esperanza and engage in discussions about the historical and social context of the story. These types of activities promote deeper language use and require students to communicate their thinking using more complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

Higher levels of discourse and language complexity are supported by the text in terms of performance expectations. According to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, students at this level start to generate “short text that conveys intended purpose using predictable organizational patterns” and gradually develop more sophisticated and meaningful language. *Esperanza Rising* allows students to practice structuring their thoughts through more rigorous tasks, such as literary essays and written responses.

Both *The Name Jar* and *Esperanza Rising* align with the WIDA PRIME framework, but they support multilingual learners in different ways based on developmental level. *The Name Jar* is highly accessible for younger learners, while *Esperanza Rising* promotes more advanced language use, critical thinking, and engagement with complex ideas. Together, these texts demonstrate that effective instruction for multilingual learners does not require simplifying content, but rather providing meaningful and appropriate supports that allow students to engage with rigorous, grade-level material (WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition).

## Step 5: Redesign & Visual Support Creation

Create a comic strip script for multilingual learners in grade 1, focused on the topic of identity, names, and belonging based on the book *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi. Use the following vocabulary words: name, special, culture, different, same, kind, and appreciate. The comic should feature elementary school students, a parent, and a community member, and present the content in a way that supports students at the Developing WIDA proficiency level. Include simplified academic language, visual cues, and culturally inclusive examples. Provide panel-by-panel (6 panels total) descriptions and suggested dialogue.

Here's a **6-panel comic strip script** designed for **Grade 1 multilingual learners at the Developing WIDA level**, inspired by themes from *The Name Jar* (without reproducing copyrighted text). It uses **simplified academic language, visual cues, and culturally inclusive examples**, and incorporates the vocabulary: **name, special, culture, different, same, kind, appreciate**.

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Create a scaffolded graphic organizer activity for multilingual learners in grade 5 based on the novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan. Focus on the theme of character development and resilience. Use the following vocabulary words: resilience, struggle, change, hope, and identity. Design the activity for students at the Expanding WIDA proficiency level. Include a graphic organizer, 3–4 guided discussion questions, and sentence frames to support speaking and writing. Do not create a full lesson plan. Only provide the student activity with clear directions and examples of responses.



Below is a **student-facing activity only**—no full lesson plan—designed for **Grade 5 multilingual learners at the Expanding WIDA level**. It focuses on **character development and resilience** in *Esperanza Rising* and uses the vocabulary: **resilience, struggle, change, hope, identity**.

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### Character Development & Resilience Activity

#### Directions



# Comic Strip Script: "Our Special Names"

6 Panels — Students, a Parent, and a Community Member

## Panel 1 — Classroom Arrival

### Visual:

A bright classroom. Children hang backpacks. A teacher smiles at a new student. A name chart is on the wall with pictures next to names.

### Dialogue:

- **Teacher:** "Class, this is **Minji**. Her **name** is very **special**."
- **Student 1:** "Hi, Minji! Welcome!"

### Support Cue:

A small bubble showing a name tag with "Minji" and a heart.

## Panel 2 — Sharing Names

### Visual:

Students sit in a circle. Each child holds a card with their name and a small picture showing something from their **culture** (e.g., food, flag, family tradition).

### Dialogue:

- **Student 2:** "My name is **Luis**. I eat tamales in my **culture**."
- **Minji:** "My name is **Minji**. I eat kimchi in my culture."

### Support Cue:

Small drawings of tamales and kimchi next to the speakers.

## Panel 3 — Feeling Different

### Visual:

Minji looks unsure. A thought bubble shows kids saying her name in different ways.

### Dialogue:

- **Minji (thinking):** "My name sounds **different**."
- **Student 3:** "Different is okay. We are not all the **same**."

### Support Cue:

Two stick figures labeled "different" and "same."



## Panel 4 — A Parent Visits

### Visual:

Minji's parent stands at the front of the class holding a family photo and a paper with Minji's name in Korean characters.

### Dialogue:

- **Parent:** "Minji's name means 'bright and smart.' It is **special** in our culture."
- **Teacher:** "Thank you for sharing!"

### Support Cue:

A speech bubble showing Minji's name written in English and Korean.

## Panel 5 — A Community Member Helps

### Visual:

A friendly librarian or community helper visits with a book cart labeled "Stories From Our Cultures."

### Dialogue:

- **Community Member:** "We have books with names from many cultures."
- **Student 4:** "We can **appreciate** all names!"



## Panel 6 — Belonging Together

### Visual:

Students create a "Our Special Names" poster with drawings and name cards. Everyone smiles, including Minji.

### Dialogue:

- **Teacher:** "We show **kind** hearts when we say names correctly."
- **Minji:** "I feel like I belong. Thank you!"

### Support Cue:

A big poster with colorful name cards and a heart in the center.

## How This Supports Developing-Level Multilingual Learners

- **Simplified academic language** with repeated key vocabulary
- **Visual cues** to support comprehension
- **Short, clear dialogue**
- **Culturally inclusive examples**
- **Themes of identity, belonging, and respect**



Read the selected chapters from *Esperanza Rising*. Then use the graphic organizer, discussion questions, and sentence frames to explain how Esperanza grows and shows **resilience** during her **struggles**.

## 1. Graphic Organizer: Esperanza's Journey of Resilience

### Directions:

In each section, write notes or draw simple symbols to show Esperanza's experiences. Use the vocabulary words in your responses.

### A. Esperanza's Struggle

What problem or challenge does Esperanza face in this part of the story?

Sentence frame:

- "One important **struggle** Esperanza faces is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

Example:



- "One important **struggle** Esperanza faces is learning to work in the fields because she has \_\_\_\_\_"

### B. How Esperanza Changes

How does Esperanza's behavior, attitude, or situation change?

Sentence frame:

- "Esperanza **changes** when she \_\_\_\_\_."

Example:

- "Esperanza **changes** when she decides to help her family instead of waiting for others to help her."

### C. Evidence of Resilience

What actions show Esperanza's resilience?

Sentence frame:

- "Esperanza shows **resilience** by \_\_\_\_\_."

Example:

- "Esperanza shows **resilience** by practicing sweeping every day until she gets better."

### D. Moments of Hope

What gives Esperanza hope during difficult times?

Sentence frame:

- "Esperanza feels **hope** when \_\_\_\_\_."

Example:

- "Esperanza feels **hope** when she remembers her father's words about the wind and the future."

### E. Identity: Who Is Esperanza Becoming?

How is Esperanza's identity changing as she faces challenges?

Sentence frame:

- "Esperanza's **identity** changes from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_."

Example:

- "Esperanza's **identity** changes from a girl who depended on others to a girl who works hard and supports her family."



## 2. Guided Discussion Questions

Discuss with a partner or small group. Use the sentence frames to support your speaking.

### 1. What is one major struggle Esperanza faces?

**Speaking frame:**

- "One major **struggle** Esperanza faces is \_\_\_\_\_."

### 2. How does Esperanza show resilience when things get hard?

**Speaking frame:**

- "She shows **resilience** by \_\_\_\_\_."

### 3. What gives Esperanza hope during the story?

**Speaking frame:**

- "Esperanza feels **hope** when \_\_\_\_\_."

### 4. How does Esperanza's identity change from the beginning to this part of the book?

**Speaking frame:**

- "Her **identity** changes because \_\_\_\_\_."

## 3. Writing Support: Short Response

**Directions:**

Use your graphic organizer to write 4–6 sentences explaining how Esperanza develops as a character.

**Sentence frames:**

- "In this part of the story, Esperanza experiences a **struggle** when \_\_\_\_\_."
- "This **struggle** causes her to **change** because \_\_\_\_\_."
- "She shows **resilience** by \_\_\_\_\_."
- "She feels **hope** when \_\_\_\_\_."
- "These events change her **identity** by \_\_\_\_\_"



One instructional challenge I identified in *The Name Jar* is that, although the text is meaningful and culturally relevant, it does not provide explicit scaffolds to support multilingual learners in developing academic language, specifically in structured speaking and vocabulary use. To address this, I used Copilot to generate a comic strip script for grade 1 multilingual learners focused on the themes of identity, names, and belonging. I prompted Copilot to include key vocabulary such as *name, special, culture, different, and kind*, and to design the comic at the Developing WIDA proficiency level with simplified language and visual supports. Copilot provided a clear and student-friendly structure. However, I found that the output did not accurately follow the storyline of *The Name Jar* or fully capture the key themes of the text. For example, it lacked the central conflict surrounding Unhei's struggle with her identity and did not reflect important moments such as the name jar, her internal conflict, and the resolution where her classmates show kindness and appreciation for her culture. Because of this, I had to revise a significant amount of the dialogue and sequencing to better align with the actual important events and themes of the story, including identity, belonging, and cultural acceptance.

In my revisions, I also made sure the dialogue followed the story in chronological order so that each panel built on the previous one. By doing this, it would better support students' comprehension of the text. Additionally, I incorporated repeated sentence frames such as "My name is \_\_\_" and "My name is special because \_\_\_" to provide structured opportunities for students to practice academic language. I also adjusted the dialogue to be developmentally appropriate and used visual cues such as the facial expressions and small symbolic pictures. To further support students who may need additional language support, I highlighted key vocabulary words in a different color to draw attention to important terms and support vocabulary development. The final redesigned comic supports multilingual learners by reducing linguistic complexity while also maintaining access to grade-level content. Through the use of visuals, repetition, and structured/simplified dialogue, this revised comic would be accessible for all learners. This aligns with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework (2020), which emphasizes that language development occurs through meaningful, scaffolded interaction and the integration of content and language. Furthermore, the redesign supports New York State Next Generation Learning Standards such as 1SL1 and 1SL4, as students are encouraged to engage in collaborative conversations and express their ideas clearly using complete sentences. This redesign also reflects my teaching philosophy because it promotes an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment where students' identities are valued and used as a foundation for language development.

# ♥ My Name is Special ♥

**1 First day at school**  
 Teacher: Class, this is Unhei.  
 Unhei: My name is... Unhei.  
 Boy: How do you say your name?  
 Girl: Your name is different.

**2 At home**  
 Unhei: My name is different. I don't like it.  
 Mother: Your name is special. It is part of your culture.  
 Unhei: My name is special...

**3 Looking at the name jar**  
 Unhei: My name is different... Maybe I need a new name. I don't think American kids will like me.

**4 Thinking and talking to the shopkeeper**  
 Unhei: These names are not me...  
 Shopkeeper: Your name tells your story. Your name is special.  
 Unhei: My name is special because it is me.

**5 Back at school**  
 Unhei: My name is Unhei.  
 Boy: My name is Unhei. I will keep my name.  
 Girl: My name is special.

**6 The truth and belonging**  
 Unhei: I took the name jar. Your name is special.  
 Teacher: We are kind. We say names the right way.  
 Boy: Unhei!  
 Unhei: My name is Unhei. I feel happy. I belong.

★ My name is... \_\_\_\_\_ ♥ My name is special because... \_\_\_\_\_ 🌍 All names are important.

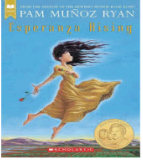
One instructional challenge I identified in *Esperanza Rising* is that the text includes complex vocabulary and in-depth themes, with limited built-in scaffolds. This can make it difficult for multilingual learners to independently access and participate in group discussions about key events in the story. Themes such as resilience, identity, and coming of age require students to think deeply and use academic language, but the text itself does not provide enough structured support to guide students in doing this. To address this challenge, I used Copilot to generate a scaffolded graphic organizer activity for 5th-grade multilingual learners focused on character development and resilience. In my prompt, I asked Copilot to include key vocabulary words such as resilience, struggle, change, hope, and identity, as well as sentence frames and guided questions aligned to the Expanding WIDA proficiency level. Even though Copilot did generate a strong starting point that included a detailed organizer, discussion questions, and writing supports, I found that the output was overly complex and included too many components at once, which could overwhelm students rather than support them, especially multilingual learners.

As a result, I revised the activity to make it more accessible and developmentally appropriate for my learners. I simplified the structure by focusing on a clear Beginning, Middle, and End organizer, allowing students to track Esperanza's journey in a more manageable way. I also reduced the number of discussion questions and shortened the writing component to just 2–3 sentences to minimize cognitive overload while still maintaining opportunities for language

production. Additionally, I highlighted key vocabulary words to support comprehension and intentionally included sentence frames to guide both speaking and writing. I also added an option for students to draw or use their home language to express their understanding, which supports multilingual learners in connecting new content to their existing linguistic resources.


The final redesigned activity supports multilingual learners by breaking down complex ideas into smaller, structured tasks and providing multiple entry points for understanding, including visuals, repetition, and guided language use. This aligns with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework (2020) that places emphasis on the importance of scaffolding, multimodal learning, and opportunities for students to develop academic language through meaningful interaction. The activity also aligns with New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, including 5R2, as students identify and explain themes such as resilience and perseverance, 5R3, as they analyze how Esperanza changes over time, and 5R4, as they work with key vocabulary to support comprehension. In addition, the activity supports 5SL1, as students engage in structured discussions using sentence frames to share their ideas and respond to others.

This process also highlighted the importance of teacher judgment when using AI tools in instructional design. While Copilot helped generate a starting point, it could not fully account for the specific needs of my students or determine the appropriate level of support required. As an educator, I am the one who understands my students’ linguistic, academic, and developmental needs, and I must make intentional decisions to ensure instruction is accessible and meaningful. AI can be a useful initial step, but it cannot replace the role of a teacher in designing instruction that is responsive, differentiated, and aligned to students’ best interests.




## Esperanza's Journey of Change

**Directions:** Read the selected chapters from *Esperanza Rising*.  
Use the organizer and questions to explain how Esperanza grows and shows resilience.




**Key Vocabulary**




**resilience**

the ability to keep going when things are hard




**struggle**

a difficult time or challenge




**change**

becoming different




**hope**

feeling that things will get better









**identity**

who you are and how you see yourself



You may use your home language to help explain ideas

BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END
 <p>What is one <b>struggle</b> Esperanza faces in the beginning of the story?</p>	 <p>How does Esperanza change and show resilience in the middle of the story?</p>	 <p>How is Esperanza's <b>identity</b> different by the end of this part of the story?</p>
<p><b>Sentence frame:</b></p> <p>One struggle Esperanza faces is _____ because _____.</p>	<p><b>Sentence frame:</b></p> <p>Esperanza shows resilience by _____ and she changes by _____.</p>	<p><b>Sentence frame:</b></p> <p>By the end, Esperanza's identity changes from _____ to _____.</p>
<p> My notes or drawing:</p>	<p> My notes or drawing:</p>	<p> My notes or drawing:</p>

**Guided Discussion** (Talk with a partner or small group)

- 1 What is one struggle Esperanza faces? Sentence frame: One struggle Esperanza faces is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How does Esperanza show resilience? Sentence frame: She shows resilience by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 How does Esperanza change as the story develops? Sentence frame: She changes by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Write 2-3 Sentences**


Use the sentence frames below to write about Esperanza.

- ★ Esperanza faces a struggle when \_\_\_\_\_.
- ★ She shows resilience by \_\_\_\_\_.
- ★ She changes by \_\_\_\_\_.


# Infographic

## MAKING COMPLEX TEXTS ASSESSIBLE FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

AN ANALYSIS AND AI SUPPORTED REDISGN OF *THE NAME JAR* AND *ESPERANZA RISING*




### 1 | CORE PURPOSE




- Make grade-level texts accessible for multilingual learners (MLs)
- Provide scaffolds that maintain rigor while reducing barriers
- Build academic language, comprehension, and meaningful engagement

### 2 | TEXTS ANALYZED



**The Name Jar**

- Theme: identity, belonging, family, and self-acceptance
- Focus: navigating a new culture and finding confidence







**Esperanza Rising**

- Theme: resilience, change, and hope
- Focus: personal growth through hardship and new experiences

### 3 | STRENGTHS VS LIMITATONS

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rich themes and character development</li><li>• Connection to real-life experiences</li><li>• Strong potential for student discussion and critical thinking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited visual and language supports</li><li>• Few scaffolds for comprehension</li><li>• Abstract vocabulary can hinder understanding</li><li>• Heavy language load for MLs</li></ul>

### 4 | KEY CHALLENGES

-  • Complex vocabulary and academic language
-  • Lack of built-in language scaffolds and supports
-  • Complex themes and cultural references that can be challenging to understand
-  • High cognitive and linguistic demands for English learners

### 5 | INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS & REDESIGN


AI DRIVEN REDESIGN (COPILOT)

- Sentence frames for speaking & writing
- Visuals, pictures, graphic organizers
- Highlight key vocabulary with definitions
- Collaborative discussion and partner work

• *The Name Jar*-> comic strip with visual sequence & sentence frames

• *Esperanza Rising*-> graphic organizer with beginning, middle, & end (with guided questions).

### 6 | IMPACT & FINAL TAKEAWAY



- Supports comprehension through scaffolds and visuals
- Provides structured language for discussion
- Helps students access complex texts
- Promotes participation & engagement for MLs

• Educators cannot rely solely on AI to design instruction. Only teachers truly know their students. Human judgment ensures that instruction is meaningful and appropriate, and in the best interest of every learner.

Effective education is not about simplifying, but about providing the right supports so all students can access, understand, and succeed.

[Link to infographic](#)

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